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Bushnell's AR TRS-25



Bushnell's AR TRS-25 – An excellent red dot sight for your AR, and it leaves with enough cash to go shooting.

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About 3 or 4 months ago, I ran into a young guy while at the range, he had just purchased an M-16, a red dot sight from Walmart and some ammo. The poor fella was having problems hitting the target and expressed his frustration with a colorful expletive directed at the Chinese made red dot sight. I offered my help, which he gladly accepted. So, I took him from zeroing his iron sights first; followed by the red dot, all of which was done at 25 yards. We then switched targets to a silhouette and again his results were lackluster. He said to me, "See, it's this f---ing cheap sight." I asked him to let me shoot it and proceeded to place 5 rounds, firing unsupported, in center mass. After a few more expletives we got down to figuring out what he was doing wrong, which I'll describe as just about everything – stance, trigger pull, mounting the rifle, using a magazine well grip, etc. The diagnosis was poor skill sets; not his equipment.

From that interaction it became clear to me that blaming poor results on equipment is more common than one might think. That's not to say that a sight won't fail to hold zero because it's

happened to me. Or, worse yet, the mount you thought was snugged down to 55 inch^l pounds is only hand tight. The truth of the matter is that today's equipment, at almost any price point, is pretty darn good and you'll find that performance issues usually fall squarely on the shooter's shoulders. Having an Aimpoint Micro H-1 or T-1 does not magically manifest itself into positive results. It's when you combine sharpened skills with tier-one equipment that you optimize.

So, given a choice between an Aimpoint T-1 at \$690 or a three day carbine class with ammo, take the later because your return on investment will be significantly higher. What's a shooter to do then? Research!

There are several large reputable companies manufacturing red dot sights that do a very nice job of getting you on target and keeping you there. Bushnell is one, and in this review I'll share my impressions of their very fine AR TRS-25.

There are numerous reviews of Bushnell's TRS-25 floating around; offering varying levels of detail. Much to my chagrin they share a common thread, a reviewer who qualifies the sight's performance with "for the price."

"... and it holds zero really well for the price..."

Guys it either holds zero or it does not. It's binary; there is no in between, be it \$10 or \$1,000. Get off the cost and address performance. It drives me nuts because it's apologetic and sets up artificial barriers. What the hell is wrong with value?

Bushnell's AR TRS-25 has nothing to apologize for, and a great deal to tout.

Bushnell introduced the Trophy TRS-25 in March of 2009 followed by the AR TRS-25 in July of 2013. Although the technical specifications are identical, there are two differences worth mentioning.



First, the Trophy version does not include the riser. It was intended for hunting rifles. The AR TRS-25 includes a riser to perfectly co-witness the optic with your Backup Iron Sights (BUIS).

Second, the placement of the LED module on the original Trophy model was at the 4 or 5 o'clock position and protruding slightly into the field of view, as seen through the eyepiece. The AR TRS-25 places the LED module at the 6 o'clock position so it lines up with the front sight post and is less invasive to the field of view.

Bushnell chose a 3 MOA dot so at 100 yards it covers a three inch target, an interesting approach because at the time industry was promoting 2 MOA and 4 MOA dots. Maybe it was tongue in cheek, or Bushnell wanted to fill a void space. I found the 3 MOA dot to perform well at CQB/CQC ranges, which is what this optic is designed to do. For 100 yards and beyond there is no substitute for a magnified optic, or a ballistic compensated sight. However, the 3 MOA dot tries to strike a balance between close quarters and longer range shooting.

The AR TRS-25 has 11 brightness settings and an "OFF" position in a bidirectional rotary switch with positive detents at each setting. Every position has a firm and positive feel even with a gloved hand - an excellent implementation.

The aiming dot is clean and crisp displaying blooming in the higher brightness settings.

One interesting comparison that comes up regularly in TRS-25 reviews is the absence of night vision settings. Let's drill down on that objection.

Most people I know who use night vision devices professionally wear the AN/PVS14 over the weak eye; leaving their dominant eye or the eye on their strong side to interact with the weapon's sight. They also use IR laser aiming modules or visible laser aiming modules for targeting and / or designation. So, not having night vision settings as part of the dot brightness electronics should not present a huge problem; in fact, it's trivial.



Brightness settings moving left to right 1-5-11

The red dot brightness settings are more than adequate under most ambient light levels, but needless to say this is highly subjective and there are ambient light and target color combinations that interact to make the red dot



difficult to see; that's why co-witnessing is important. I've made a note to task myself to chase down a tool that will

allow an objective measurement of dot brightness relative to ambient light - I may try doing that with a light meter but for now it's subjective.

The lenses are fully coated with excellent clarity with a very slight tinge of green to the image.

This optic is powered by a CR2032 Lithium battery with a statistical run time of 3,000 hours. You always want to keep in mind that battery life is influenced by environmental conditions so keep spares. CR2032 batteries will run you about a \$1 a piece so keep a few spares handy. I've embraced a simple routine of changing out the batteries in my optics once a year, in January.

The TRS-25 has a hefty and solid feel attributable to its aluminum body yet it remains very compact at an overall length of 2.4 inches. The exit pupil is somewhat narrow at 22mm but no more so than that of the Aimpoint T-1. Any misalignments of the head, or weapon cant, will lose your dot. A slightly larger exit pupil would help; however it does force good technique.

Another feature that some reviewers take issue with is waterproofing. The TRS-25 is IPX7 rated, which means complete submersion to 1 meter for 30 minutes. The comparison is generally made to the Aimpoint T-1 which is rated at 25 meters. Clearly, the T-1 does better so you need to decide how important that difference is to you. Personally, if you drop your weapon, or yourself, in more than 1 meter of water you have other problems to think about. Besides, what the heck are you doing running and gunning without a sling anyway.

Zeroing the sight is accomplished via the two turrets, which provide wind and elevation adjustments of .5" at 100 yds. Like some of the older Comp ML2s you'll want to make sure that the laser tube is centered prior to zeroing.

Simply look through the eyepiece and confirm that the internal tube is centered in the housing.

The AR TRS-25 is an impressive optic that is multi-platform capable and runs well on an AR, SMG, AK, even a shotgun. So, there's a lot to like.

In the "not to like" column, I placed just one thing...

Please tether the turret caps with steel wire on the next release. The optic requires nothing else.

The point of this article is to introduce you to Bushnell's AR TRS-25 to let you see for yourself that it is a well-qualified substitute. I don't wish to suggest that you not purchase an Aimpoint T-1, if that is your goal. What I am saying is that if you cannot, don't slash your wrists, or miss a mortgage payment or car payment to do it. Bushnell has you covered with the AR TRS-25; this is one impressive mini red dot, and it rocks! I've included a short matrix to let you evaluate the differences, and what if anything you'll be giving up when choosing between the two.

Make your decision on the basis of what you actually need then assess how well each competing option meets those needs. After you've done that, pop down to the dollars and cents to decide if one or the other is actually providing diminishing returns. Remember that experiencing diminishing returns is not an indication that something is bad; it is simply a way of saying that **to you** the added cost is not providing a corresponding increase in the level of usefulness.

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Comparative Analysis between Bushnell's AR TRS-25 and the Industry Benchmark for Micro Red Dot Sights.

Bushnell AR TRS-25	Aimpoint Micro T-1	
Yes	Yes	Red dot sight
Yes	Yes	LED (Light Emitting Diode)
3 MOA	4 or 2 MOA	Dot size
Yes	Yes	Parallax Free
Unlimited	Unlimited	Eye Relief
No	Yes	Night Vision Compatibility
Multi-Coated	Multi-Coated	Lens Coating
No	No	Magnification
(1) CR2032 3V Lithium	(1) CR2032 3V Lithium	Battery
3,000 hrs. continuous use	50,000 hrs. continuous use	Battery Life
N/A	500,000 hrs. continuous use	Battery Life AT Night Vision Setting
Manual Rotary 11 positions and off	Manual Rotary 12 positions and off (4 are NV positions)	Dot Intensity Control
Aluminum	Aluminum	Housing Material
Hard Anodized	Hard Anodized	Housing Finish
Black	Black	Housing Color
Yes	Yes	Adjustable Windage and Elevation
.5 inches at 100 yds. (14mm at 100 meters)	.5 inches at 100 yds. (14mm at 100 meters)	1 click value
Picatinny/Weaver	Picatinny/Weaver	Mounting
IPX7	25m, (80ft.)	Waterproof
3.7 oz. (106g)	3 oz. (84g)	Weight
2.4 inches (61.8mm)	2.4 inches (62mm)	Length
22mm	22mm	Exit Pupil
\$170.95	\$691	M.S.R.P

ⁱ Note: On some mounts, the cross bolt may sheer if tightened to 55 inch pounds. Always contact the manufacturer for the recommended spec. On lighter cross bolts do not exceed 15 – 20 inch pounds.